

The problem of radical Salafism in Sweden in the context of terrorist threats

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Abstract

The article demonstrates the phenomenon of the radical Salafism in Sweden in the context of terrorist threats. Due to the radicalisation of terrorism, it is an important problem that also affects many other European and non-European countries. The aim of the article is the analysis of the background of the activity of some radical groups and the terrorist cells that make references to the character of this problem. The article refers to some social and economic conditions for violent radicalisation and its challenges for the security. It is focused on the most important dimensions of the counter-terrorism strategy implemented by the Swedish authorities to fight and prevent extremism. The methodological analysis is based on the integration of historical and system method and refers to Marc Sageman's theory of the jihadist networks, which is more appropriate to understand how they appear and operate. The main conclusion of the article is that jihadist extremism has appeared in the multicultural society which is based on the idea of integration and inclusion. Sweden has implemented the multidimensional and integrated counter-terrorism policy to prevent violent extremism. Regarding the positive attitudes towards immigrants still are the majority, it should be emphasised that the terrorist threat fuels the anti-immigration orientation.

Keywords: Sweden, terrorist threats, radical Salafism, security

Problem radykalnego salafizmu w Szwecji w kontekście zagrożeń terrorystycznych

Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje problem radykalnego salafizmu w Szwecji w kontekście krystalizacji zagrożeń terrorystycznych. Ze względu na radykalizację terroryzmu jest to ważny problem, będący udziałem także wielu innych państw europejskich i pozaeuropejskich.

Celem artykułu jest diagnoza wyzwań dla bezpieczeństwa, płynących ze strony nurtów radykalnych w środowiskach imigranckich, a także działań zapobiegawczych, wdrażanych na przestrzeni ostatnich lat przez szwedzkie władze. Ponieważ badania nad terroryzmem i ekstremizmem salafickim implikują przyjęcie metod interdyscyplinarnych, w artykule zastosowano metodę historyczną i systemową, a także odwołano się do M.Sagemana „teorii sieci” ilustrującej mechanizmy funkcjo-

nowania komórek terrorystycznych. Główne wnioski, płynące z zawartych w tekście rozważań, dotyczą istnienia zagrożeń terrorystycznych w państwie, którego fundamentem jest wielokulturowość i nastawienie na integrację. Ekstremizm dżihadystyczny usiłuje prowadzić swą narrację i w takim środowisku oraz dotrzeć ze swym przestaniem do mieszkających na terenie Szwecji młodych mużulmanów. Stanowi to z kolei pożywkę dla postaw antymigranckich i niechętnych mużulmanom, które – jakkolwiek nie są dominujące – zaznaczają się w pejzażu społecznym tego państwa.

Słowa kluczowe: Szwecja, zagrożenia terrorystyczne, radykalny salafizm, bezpieczeństwo

In 2015, according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) report, Sweden ranked first among 38 countries that were included in the research on the effectiveness of integration policy (see: *Migrant Integration Policy Index 2015*). The data seems to prove the effectiveness of strategies employed to equalise opportunities among multicultural environments in terms of education, employment, and state benefits. According to the research, Swedish society is characterised by relatively high level of acceptance towards immigrants and refugees as well as tolerance, when it comes to cultural diversity, although significant percentage of respondents who oppose the influx of foreigners cannot be ignored (*EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017 Sweden*: p. 18).

The matter of attitude towards refugees and the multicultural nature of some European countries is particularly relevant in the context of attitude towards Islamic communities living on the Old Continent. This topic is also present in political discourse of representatives of various political groups in Europe, including those supporting anti-immigrant rhetoric and often exploiting threat from Salafi extremism and fear of terrorism in order to seek political profits. The examples of such organisations are: *Vox* in Spain, *Alternative for Germany*, *Sweden Democrats* (a populist political party in Sweden) or the *National Rally* in France (Lecatellier 2018: p. 202). Despite Sweden demonstrating its openness to foreigners for a long time, other parallel processes should also be taken into consideration. "External Muslim attributes such as hijab or turban, especially in combination with dark complexion, make getting employed more difficult. Discrimination also affects Muslims in professions that are generally enjoying great prestige, such as teachers, doctors, or engineers" (Woźniak-Bobińska 2012: p. 233). As Marta Woźniak-Bobińska rightly points out, the idea of multiculturalism proposed for decades lacked specific strategies and solutions, while the growing percentage of immigrants who were not supporters of liberal democracy and its principles revealed a gap between theory and practice in the Swedish integration policy (Woźniak-Bobińska 2012: p. 237). Over time, extreme attitudes have started to emerge among Muslim communities in Sweden. The country has not managed to avoid the problem of integralist indoctrination, the most dramatic manifestation of which was over three hundred volunteers who left Sweden and went to the areas controlled by the so-called Islamic State, later joining its ranks and engaging in the armed conflict.

The aim of this article is to analyse the mechanisms of Salafi radicalisation in Sweden as well as the actions taken by state decision-making bodies to stop the process, and at the same time to assess their effectiveness. The article focuses on diagnosing the

conditions of this phenomenon and its scale, as well as on trying to answer the questions to what extent they can be a catalyst for terrorist threats to the state and its citizens, and whether the measures implemented by the authorities meet such challenges. The main research topic of the analysis focuses on trends in Muslim radicalism that exist in Europe, specifically in Sweden, and risk evaluation of the growing influence of such environments. It is worth noting that this problem is not just a diagnosis of the potential risk of terrorist incidents, but it is associated with the possible crystallisation of cultural and axionormative separation, as described in the theoretical model of acculturation by John W. Berry (1997: p. 10, 46). Our main research hypothesis is the assumption that in Sweden, despite the implemented policy of multicultural integration, the integralist discourse among Muslim communities still finds supporters, and in extreme cases that results in individuals undertaking extremist activities.

Materials and methods

Bartosz Bolechów suggests that methodology of research on terrorism implies the need to select an interdisciplinary range of methods (Bolechów 2012: p. 24, 33). In the effort to assemble main instruments to counter various terrorist threats, including the strategy adopted by the Swedish authorities to counter radicalisation, it is apparently beneficial to integrate the historical method – especially in the context of detecting cause and effect relationship of crystallisation of certain mechanisms – and the system level based one, which allows the issues discussed as a combination of separate elements, in which attention is focused on both the individual parts as well as on their interrelationships. The “theory of networks” that describes social movements, plays an important role as part of the study on the transformation process of modern terrorism, with its concept referring to the works of Marc Sageman, who describes jihadist cells as a type of a social movement that is composed of numerous informal networks supporting terrorism, as well as the form of their organisation (Sageman 2008: p. 29–31).

This concept is useful, when analysing the international character of jihadism, with its structures marking their presence in so many distant areas. It also helps us to understand complex radicalisation trajectories, which, in turn, imply the specific nature of preventive measures that the authorities must take at the decision-making level, and the relevant bodies and services at the executive level. In this analysis, *Jihadist Salafism* is recognised as the most extremist form of radical Islamism defining a doctrinal foundation for groups, cells and individuals, and is merged with ideological interpretation referring to religion to justify the use of violence (Kosmynka 2019: p. 78–79). Taking that into account, the term “Salafist global jihadist movement” is synonymous, exemplified by the Al-Qaeda network, as well as the so-called Islamic State, including informal structure and a common denominator in the form of a specific world view, motives, and methods of cooperation (Wejkszner 2010: p. 14; Brachman 2009: p. 34).

The issue of terrorist threats in Scandinavia is rarely considered by Polish authors. Among publications exploring the topic of multiculturalism of Swedish society, including

its Muslim communities, the work of Marta Woźniak-Bobińska (2018) is worth mentioning. The issue of Salafi radicalisation and preventive anti-terrorism strategies in this area are mentioned in the studies of Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon authors, such as Magnus Ranstorp, Linus Gustafsson, Amir Rostami, Judith Bergman, although they point out the small number of publications and studies on Islamist networks in Sweden, radicalisation mechanisms and the actual size of the problem in this part of Scandinavia.

The determinants of Salafi radicalisation in Sweden

Muslims living in Sweden do not constitute a homogeneous group; among them are Sunni and Shiites, coming from various countries, including certain regions of Maghreb, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, and Iran. The problematic Salafi socialisation and the resulting radicalisation process is intertwined in Sweden with socio-economic factors and – in some cases – crystallisation of “parallel societies”, which are built upon and function on the pillar of different axionormative systems, a phenomenon analysed in the European context in Germany and France (Kosmyńska 2012: p. 199–202). Within a decade (2008–2018), the estimated number of supporters of Salafi ideals increased in Sweden by as much as ten times to around 2,000 (Ranstorp et al. 2019: p. 19–20), which, of course, does not mean that every single person of that group has become a jihadist. Magnus Ranstorp, an expert in the field of terrorism, emphasises that for a long time there was a lack of in-depth research on the conditions and mechanisms of development of Salafi attitudes, which probably hampered the possibility of an adequate and quick response to the problem (Ranstorp 2011: p. 2). Isolation and aversion to liberal democracy have been repeatedly expressed by imams representing integrist views, and some leaders of Muslim communes, who consider cultural integration a threat to their identity, which should be based on strictly observed religious norms that regulate customs and social traditions. We should point out that the majority of Muslim organisations that exist in Europe declare respect for the principles of liberal democracy and strive to improve the living conditions of Muslims on the Old Continent, while protecting their cultural and religious identity (Kołsut-Markowska 2014: p. 104–105).

In Sweden, the majority of Muslims live in big cities: Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The mechanisms of radicalisation can be observed on the example of Gothenburg, the city that managed to recruit the largest in Sweden number of volunteers to fight in the ranks of the so-called Islamic State (about a hundred people). Immigrants make up one-third of the city's population, and social problems have become noticeable: conflicts with the law, high – as for Sweden – unemployment rate, and incomplete education – in immigrant environments, two-thirds of teenagers aged 15 quit education (*Integration of Refugees...* 2017: p. 18; Aldén, Hammerstedt 2014: p. 6–7). A significant proportion of Muslims occupy lower – compared to native Swedes – levels of the social ladder, live in less prominent districts and their children attend far less prestigious schools and obtain relatively worse academic achievements (Woźniak-Bobińska 2012: p. 233). Obviously, radicalisation is correlated to social exclusion and discrimination, but these are not the only causes and conditions of the process, and we discuss that issue later.

The Järva district in Stockholm is considered a high activity zone for the integrist attitudes, which is a result of socio-economic problems that Muslim immigrants living there experience (Bergman 2018: p. 7). The example of this region demonstrates the links between the trends mentioned before and the activity of criminal structures; the convergence of this process is crucial for the presence of radical Muslim networks not only in Europe. Salafism supporters, including its moderate forms, advocate for social and cultural isolation of Muslims living on the Old Continent and promote separation of their axionormative system from liberal democracy, which allegedly threatens their identity. In Gothenburg, extremists were persuading Muslims living there not to take part in local elections, claiming that it is against Islam, and one of the local imams proclaimed Gothenburg as the capital of Wahhabism in Europe (Bergman 2018: p. 9). Such attitudes, while not justifying the use of violence and armed struggle directly, may result in growing hostility towards the host society, and as a consequence might lead to terrorist involvement.

The majority of Muslim immigrants in Europe and worldwide, which should be emphasised, do not support jihadist ideology, but challenges of modern life and socio-economic problems affecting young people make them vulnerable to the influences mentioned before, mainly in the virtual space, where the extremist narrative might result in single individuals joining certain terrorist cells. This discourse is perfectly exemplified by the words of one of the extremists recruiting young people who experience confusion, identity crisis, and consider themselves being discriminated by Swedish society: "Stop taking drugs and fight back. Fight for God. Fight for freedom of Muslims who are being murdered and persecuted. You are wasting your life. You don't get back anything from the Swedes." (Hakim 2016). There is yet another testimony of a caliphate fighter that is also worth mentioning: "I would like to share my joy with you. The Islamic State is already in power in Rakka. There are mujahideen here, and they are experiencing something extraordinary. Rakka is the most modern Syrian city. It has many beautiful places that resemble Europe. A few months ago women walked the streets wearing European-style clothes. People used to live here like they did in Europe. You could meet a woman walking with a stranger who was not her relative (...). With the help of God, the mujahideen have managed to establish the law of Islam here." (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 95–96). In the face of this discourse, counter-terrorist efforts, and attention, especially in the period 2012–2014 were given to Swedish citizens travelling abroad to participate in military conflicts and violent activities.

This message is sometimes assimilated by young Muslims who have immigrated to Scandinavia or, to a lesser extent, by those who were born there. In fact, for years, similar practices of indoctrination and recruitment have been employed in Western and Southern Europe. This mechanism is intertwined with the phenomenon of leaderless jihad analysed in many studies (Schori-Liang 2017: pp. 88–89); the phenomenon of decentralisation and fragmentation of extremist groups and movements united by a common idea, and self-affiliation of individuals recruited by a global social movement, one of which is jihadism.

Radicalisation can be defined as an extreme state of cognitive, emotional and behavioural nature, oscillating towards approval of violence (McCauley, Moskalenko

2008: p. 33). On the individual level, it can be referred to as an increase in tendencies to accept undemocratic activities aimed at achieving a certain goal. In most conceptual approaches, radicalisation is defined as a process, in which the key element is a dominant aspect of the transformation: manifestation of an increasingly ultimate narrative, the capstone of which is a dimension of self-sacrifice and externalisation of such attitudes in the form of use of violence. The functioning of such mechanisms can be observed in various environments in many countries. Despite life conditions, income level, employment status, etc., all playing an important role, it would be a simplification to limit the phenomenon of radicalisation vectors only to economic factors, which is pointed out by experts researching the conditioning and determining elements of this process. For example, a Spanish scientist from the Elcano Royal Institute, Fernando Reinares, emphasises that the process of radicalisation can influence even a person who meets 90 percent of the criteria for social integration (García-Calvo, Reinares 2012). In Spain, since we have experience with ETA, we are well aware of this fact, and we are the last to associate poverty and marginalisation with terrorism (Torrico 2013). Identity crisis, as well as internalisation of the ultimate vision of reality and faith, can derive from many factors, among which, of course, social exclusion and experienced prejudices or socio-economic problems usually play an important role, although they are not the only factors. The key is to make efforts to neutralise ideologies justifying the use of violence, as well as to identify individuals particularly vulnerable to such a message. Some studies accentuate the role of ideology and inability to adapt to or accept the integration process, or the lack of willingness to do so, as the factors that are crucial in recruiting so-called foreign fighters among (post)immigrant Muslim communities in Europe (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 67).

The presence of extremist trends in Sweden dates back to the 1970s, when members and supporters of Muslim terrorist organisations were active in the country, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA) as well as representatives of the political far-right. In the 1990s, Islamists associated with Al-Qaeda also appeared, but at that time most of their activity remained limited to logistics, including collection of funds for terrorist organisations active in their home countries (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 24). The same mechanism was also taking place in other European countries (e.g. Spain, France), where in the 1990s Islamists focused primarily on indirect forms of terrorist activity, expanding their structures and organising support for groups that were linked with them, but those remained active primarily outside the Old Continent.

After the attack on 11 September 2001, the Swedish police detected small groups of Al-Qaeda supporters living in the country; members of these groups had been exposed to fundamentalist ideals while studying religion in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. An increase in terrorist threat started in 2005, which was linked with intensification of direct jihadist violence manifestations on the Old Continent (Madrid 2004, London 2005). In Sweden, in the first decade of the 21st century, there were cells affiliated to the Al-Qaeda network. One of their leaders was Muhammad Moumou from Morocco (aka Abu Kasuarah al-Maghribi), who was involved in the Casablanca bombing in 2003, and then joined

forces with another jihadist Abu Musab az-Zarqawi, who was fighting in Iraq. This is where Moumou died in 2008. Osama Kassir, a Swedish citizen of Lebanese origin was convicted in the United States of an attempt to set up a paramilitary jihadist training camp in Oregon and distribution of terrorist materials (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 25).

Some extremists, including Anwar al-Awlaki, the leader of the Al-Qaida branch in the Arabian Peninsula, threatened to kill the Swedish graphic designer Lars Vilks, who made caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. Along with international escalation of terrorist attacks, incidents of this nature also began to appear in Sweden. In December 2010, an Iraqi citizen died as a result of a suicide detonation in central Stockholm (the attack did not cause any other casualties). A year later, the police detained several extremists who were planning to kill Lars Vilks during his exhibition in Gothenburg. Jihadists living in Sweden were also involved in terrorist attacks carried out in other European countries, for example, Osama Kray, who was suspected of having connections with the cells responsible for the attacks in Paris in November 2015 and Brussels in March 2016, was detained in April 2016. A former fighter from the so-called Islamic State, Mohamed Aziz Belkaid, an Algerian terrorist living in Sweden, was also accused of taking part in the events in Paris (Reinares 2015: p. 5). Such connections once again illustrate a distributed nature of jihadist extremist network structures, where small commando teams conduct terrorist activities, engaging and then disappearing.

In 2010, the National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment (NCT) estimated the level of challenges resulting from extremism, and the results suggested an upward trend. The assessment corresponded to the transnational nature of international terrorism transformation, largely identified as jihadist Salafism. The scale of the danger further increased a few years later, as a result of the conflict in Syria and the rise of the Islamic State. In 2016, it was estimated that over three hundred self-proclaimed caliphate fighters originated in Sweden, more than one hundred and forty of whom eventually returned to Scandinavia (Hakim 2016). About 75 percent of them had Swedish citizenship, and over 30% were born in the country (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 104). The data illustrates the problems arising from the phenomenon of what is referred to as homegrown terrorism, which has intensified in recent years and started affecting many Western and Southern European countries. On many occasions, the Swedish police investigated people suspected of trying to reach Syria or Iraq, or supporting caliphate ideology in Sweden. Noticeable impact of extremist propaganda prompted the Swedish security authorities (SÄPO) to intensify monitoring of environments potentially vulnerable to recruitment attempts. Many of the successfully recruited took part in military operations, executions, and other criminal activities. Swedish foreign fighters participating in activities of jihadist organisations was not an isolated case – before 2010, about 30 people managed to reach Somalia, where they joined the ranks of the Ash-Shabab group (Gustafsson, Ranstorp 2017: p. 23). However, what really intensified this phenomenon on a global scale was the emergence of the so-called Islamic State. As a result, in recent years Sweden has become a target of terrorist attacks and incidents. On 7 April 2017, in central Stockholm, a truck driven

by an Uzbek extremist Rahmat Akilov caused seven casualties and fifteen injured. The Scandinavian country began to appear in Islamist propaganda materials as an object of interest and a potential target of terrorist attacks.

Directions of the Swedish counter-terrorism prevention

The Swedish authorities appear to be well aware of the terrorist threats, and SÄPO for years has been developing intelligence cooperation with European partners and the United States to fight extremism. The efforts are accompanied by securing appropriate anti-terrorist legislative instruments, which include several legal acts of the Ministry of Justice: defining crimes of this nature (2003)¹, aimed at preventing recruitment, training (2010, 2016)², and "money laundering" and financing terrorism (2009, 2011)³. Participation in organisations classified as terrorist, as well as their promotion and recruitment activities are subject to prosecution. In 2016, the Swedish government took initiatives to modify legal instruments to enable them to counteract extremist threats more effectively, including terrorist financing prevention. They also increased the anti-terrorist budget to SEK 65 million, which is approximately USD 7 million (*Country Reports on Terrorism 2016*, July 2017: p. 158). Steps have been taken to achieve more effective border control, especially since November 2015, aiming at tightening control of asylum seekers arriving in the country and preventing entry of suspected extremists. Many former fighters of the so-called Islamic State were detained. In March 2016, the Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the Gothenburg tribunal, which sentenced Iraqi Hassan al-Mandlawi and Ethiopian Al-Amin Sultan to imprisonment for terrorist activities and murder. A part of the evidence was a video, in which both men participated in execution of two people in Syria (*Country Reports on Terrorism 2016*, July 2017: p. 159). This was the first judgment given by a court in Sweden against non-Swedish nationals for involvement in acts of a terrorist nature. In June 2016, another extremist, Aydin Sevigin, was convicted under the same paragraph; he was planning a suicide attack in Sweden, which was confirmed, when explosives and propaganda materials of the so-called Islamic State were found.

Amir Rostami published interesting profiling research on the case of 41 fighters who were recruited in Sweden and later fought and died in either Syria or Iraq (Rostami et al. 2020). The results indicate that they were mostly under 26, and two-thirds of them had been in trouble with the law before. Nearly half of those extremists experienced radicalisation via direct interaction in small groups. A significant percentage of them (approx.70%) grew up or lived in environments affected by economic problems, which resulted in unstable living situation.

It is worth noting, that when comparing these studies with similar research and jihadist profiling results in Europe, for example, the research done by Fernando Reinares, Carola

¹ *Act on Criminal Responsibility for Terrorist Offences* (2003 and 2006);

² *Act on Criminal Responsibility for Public Provocation, Recruitment and Training concerning Terrorist Offences and other Particularly Serious Crime* (2010, amended 2016);

³ *Act on Measures against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing* (2009, amended 2011).

García-Calvo and Álvaro Vicente in Spain, we can see a number of common tendencies that help us visualise the scale of the problem (Reinares, García-Calvo, Vicente 2017: p. 4–7). This relates to the age of terrorists (the majority of whom are aged 18–30, with 20 being the most common age), numerous cases of a criminal past, and two channels of radicalisation (the *on-line* source, as well as part of the “*bunch of guys*” phenomenon, analysed by Marc Sageman – an interaction in a small but emotionally bonding social group). In this context, the return of former fighters of the so-called Islamic State multiply security challenges, not only because of the risk of a terrorist attack but also potential long-term indoctrination processes that target individuals vulnerable to the Islamist propaganda.

Although, compared to European countries, the radical Salafi threat in Sweden is still lower, it has become clear that in recent years the authorities in Stockholm have recognised the need to implement initiatives and programmes to prevent radicalisation, an extremely important component of modern anti-terrorist preventive strategies. As a result, special comprehensive plan was launched in 2011 in line with goals set by a dedicated EU working group in order to support the Member States in their efforts dictated by the need to neutralise the impact of extremist ideology (Radicalisation Awareness Network). In the period 2009–2012 the Swedish security strategy had to focus on the evolution of challenges paying more attention to the lone-wolf terrorism and domestic threats. Prevention, as well as mitigation, were crucial and counter-terrorist policy included cooperation between a multitude of government agencies and parts of civil society (Strandh, Eklund 2015: p. 375). Since 2014 the activities have intensified by establishing the position of the National Coordinator to safeguard democracy against violent extremism, who is responsible – and that is clearly stressed – for cooperation with local authorities in order to develop social integration programmes as well as expanding the range of preventive measures. Until 2016 there were no local initiatives aimed at counteracting terrorism by setting up socialisation programmes, but the recent circumstances stimulated intensification of such measures. By the end of April 2017, a strategy for developing structures to prevent radicalisation was employed in 134 cities, which engaged teachers, social workers, childminders, etc. (Mattsson 2019: p. 34). It is worth adding that in many cases fighting ideologically motivated extremism goes in line with activities aimed against both minor and organised crime, which are often in symbiotic relationship with terrorist cells.

Preventive strategies also employ other protective measures. In October 2019, a decision was made to expel from Sweden several radical imams, who promoted jihadist views. Home Secretary Mikael Damberg commented on this matter, expressing the view that their presence in Sweden constituted a threat to security of the state.

On 13 August 2015, the Swedish government defined a strategy aimed at minimising risks posed by ideologies and actions that legitimise the use of violence in a document entitled “Efforts to safeguard democracy against violent extremism” (Löfven 2015: p. 9–10). It specifies coordination of independent institutions at both local and governmental levels, which are responsible for developing preventive measures as well as early identification of potential threats. The initiative details general objectives, such as

supporting democratic ideals, building a civil society and endorsing activities aimed at promoting social inclusion. Crucial aspects mentioned in the document are: preventive measures (the need to eliminate the impact of radical narrative), as well as anti-radical initiatives aimed at people already in contact with extremist environments (Kotajoki 2018: p. 13–14). What is important, the strategy takes into consideration the need to carefully monitor penitentiary facilities, as this is often where jihadist interaction and, eventually, recruitment takes place. This tendency was also observed in other European countries (for example, in Spain and France) as well as non-European countries (eg. Morocco), leading to comprehensive programmes aimed at preventing radicalisation as well as counter-radicalisation (Kosmyńka 2017: p. 172–173; Kosmyńka 2019: p. 87–88).

An interesting example of practical implementation of the programmes mentioned before, is “Conversation Compass” (CC) – a textbook used by social workers, teachers, or guardians. It offers tips that help identify symptoms of radicalisation and includes instructions on what to do in the event of discovering alarming signals (Khorrami 2019: p. 4). This psychological material stresses the need to develop a skill of engaging in a dialogue with people exhibiting tendencies to form ultimate views and the accompanying inclination towards violence; the ultimate goal is to elicit a reflection and inhibit the process of externalisation of extremist beliefs. In April 2019, the authorities in Stockholm expressed the willingness to repatriate children of jihadists from Sweden who live in Syria, offering support of integration programmes, including psychological care, especially significant after traumatic experience.

It should be mentioned that anti-extremist initiatives and projects that promote tolerance and counteract extremism, which are so important in a multicultural society, are not limited to programmes intended for the young Muslim generation. In Sweden, initiatives of this kind were developed as early as in the 1990s in response to the threats from neo-Nazi groups in Kungälv and Karlskrona: Tolerance Project, Extit Fryshuset (Butt, Tuck 2015). They covered a wide spectrum of social, cultural, and psychological activities designed to prevent radicalisation as well as to educate adolescents and their families about the risks that are associated with it. This illustrates that the problem had existed in Sweden before, and it was not limited to Salafi circles.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it should be noted that the Swedish welfare system has served as a magnet for years, attracting a considerable number of immigrants looking for a better life. The armed conflict in Syria, among other factors, caused an immigration crisis, and Sweden received the largest number of asylum applications in the whole EU per capita (Woźniak-Bobińska 2018: p. 83). It is worth pointing out that in the second decade of the 21st century in Sweden, “despite the continuous high support for multicultural policy, the far-right and anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats party gained popularity, supported by voters demanding ethnically homogeneous state. The Swedes have become increasingly opposed to immigration not only because of cultural differences or ideological

reasons. (...) As a result of the financial crisis, unemployment increased and economic growth slowed down. In addition, the fear of Muslim terrorism emerged." (Woźniak-Bobińska 2018: p. 83). These mechanisms intensified Islamophobic and anti-immigration sentiment. The Molotov cocktail attack on a mosque in Uppsala in 2015 is an example. The recent and visible increase in support for the Sweden Democrats, who are opposed to immigration, was reflected in the legal regulations established in June 2016 and set for three years "(...) limiting the possibility of obtaining a residence permit by refugees and their family members" (Kobierecka 2019: p. 157).

Fundamentalism, represented by only some representatives of the Muslim community, is sometimes used as an argument to introduce more restrictive immigration policies, which in some European countries is an element of populist and ultra-right political discourse that fuels the fear of "others" and labels them as "extremists".

Obviously, the problem of Salafi radicalisation exists, and the collapse of the so-called Islamic State does not mean that the threat from political and religious extremism has been eliminated. It can be assumed with a very high degree of probability, that the core ideology of self-proclaimed caliphate and other extremist organisations is still likely to find zealous followers and supporters. Former fighters of the so-called Islamic State, who returned to their home countries, became a security threat in Europe and other parts of the world, that is why location and monitoring of radical environments is so important. Security threat resulting from radical Salafism in Sweden is not as serious as in other countries (France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain), however it exists and is a cause for concern to authorities and citizens. This proves that even a country which has been implementing comprehensive social inclusion and integration projects for years and which promotes multicultural society model, with its population largely expressing empathy and acceptance towards immigrants, is still not free from hostility of certain movements with their ideology striving to attract new members and reject principles of liberal democracy that are the foundation of European states. This certainly becomes clear, when examining closer the internet discourse and social media activity of proponents of Salafi ideology, who strongly reject the model of integration with Swedish society.

The anti-terrorist strategy set out by the authorities in Stockholm seems to take into account the complex nature of social determinants of terrorism and implements programmes counteracting the impact of integrist narrative, although of course, close monitoring and evaluation of the efforts are still required. The report published in 2019 assessing the effectiveness of preventive measures laid out by the Swedish authorities demonstrates the need for developing legislative instruments directed against financing terrorism, money laundering, etc. (*National Risk Assessment...* 2019). It should be remembered, however, how important is the logistics level of the mentioned movements, which often have a symbiotic relationship with criminal environments. It should also be emphasised that particular challenges arise from extremism motivated by Islamophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes, as illustrated by the attack carried out by Anders Breivik in Norway in 2011 or the attacks carried out in 2019 in New Zealand and the USA. It appears as if both forms of extremism remain in a "symbiotic relationship" – one provokes what

the other one legitimises. This is why large-scale, comprehensive and coordinated actions are crucial to prevent radicalisation, eliminating propagation of any ideology calling for use of violence; a task, which appears to be the most important – a long term element of counter-terrorism prevention, not only in relation to the Swedish experience.

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